

Appl. No. 10/636,055  
Amdt. Dated January 13, 2005  
Reply to Final Office Action of December 29, 2004

### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Receipt of the Final Office Action dated December 29, 2004 is hereby acknowledged. In that Action, the Examiner: 1) allowed claims 1-14 and 35-38; 2) rejected claims 23-30 as allegedly unpatentable over *Richey, II et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,988,165) in view of *Frye et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,394,088); 3) rejected claims 18, 19, 33 and 34 as allegedly unpatentable over *Todd, Jr.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,446,630); 4) rejected claims 22 and 40 as allegedly unpatentable over *Richey, II et al.* in view of *Todd, Jr.*; 5) rejected claims 31, 32 and 39 as being allegedly anticipated by *Richey, II et al.*; 6) rejected claims 41-45 as allegedly unpatentable over *Todd, Jr.* in view of *Richey, II et al.*; and 7) objected to claim 21 for informalities.

With this Response, Applicants propose amendments to claim 21, and cancel claims 15-20, 22-34 and 39-45.

#### I. ALLOWED CLAIMS AND EFFECTIVELY ALLOWED CLAIMS

Applicants appreciate the allowance of claims 1-14 and 35-38. Applicants propose amendments to claim 21 to correct the informality noted by the Examiner. Thus, claims 1-14, 21 and 35-38 should be in a condition for allowance.

#### II. CLAIM CANCELLATIONS

With this Response, Applicants cancel claims 15-20, 21-34 and 39-45. These cancellations are to allow the other claims to issue, and are without regard to the merits of the rejections presented, and are without prejudice to later asserting these claims, such as in a continuation application.

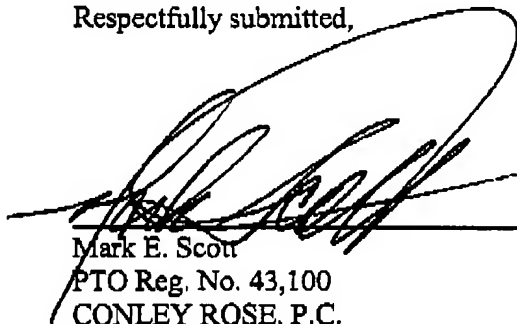
#### III. CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims and a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Appl. No. 10/636,055  
Amdt. Dated January 13, 2005  
Reply to Final Office Action of December 29, 2004

If any fees are inadvertently omitted or if any additional fees are required or have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Conley Rose, P.C. Deposit Account Number 03-2769.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark E. Scott  
PTO Reg. No. 43,100  
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.  
P. O. Box 3267  
Houston, TX 77253-3267  
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)  
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)  
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANTS